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631 particular, ceremonial services at the king's investi-
778 ture, the building of huts at Fashoda, which is both the royal capital and the cult centre of Nyikang, and the upkeep of Nyikang's other shrines and
182 those of past kings. These shrines are widely dis-
778 tributed throughout the country so that every
[794] section of it participates in the cult of Nyikang, who is, it must be borne in mind, not only the semi-divine hero of Shilluk mythology but also the king at every period of their history. Indeed, the shrines of Nyikang, what Professor Seligman calls his cenotaphs, are indistinguishable from the tomb-shrines of dead kings and they have the same ceremonial functions in the life of the people: in the rain-making ceremonies, at harvest time, and
182 in times of sickness and pestilence.[1] The religion
643 and cosmogony of the Shilluk are bound up with the political system through the identification of Nyikang with the king. The kingship stands at the centre of Shilluk moral values.

[775
771
776] We can only understand the place of the kingship in Shilluk society when we realize that it is not the individual at any time reigning who is king, but

[1] Prof. C. G. Seligman, 'The Cult of Nyakang and the Divine Kings of the Shilluk', *Report of the Wellcome Tropical Research Laboratories* (1911), pp. 221 and 225.

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
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victim into a crocodile to be a spouse to one of her crocodile relatives. Yet Nikaiya brings luck to those whom she visits by night to ask for fire; if a barren woman bears a child after such a visit it will be called Nikaiya, and the father will kill a sheep and throw it into the river. Nikaiya is known by her short stout figure and great muscular development, and by the fact that she "eats" (mouths) her words. That the river is the true home of Nikaiya is shown by the manner of sacrificing to her; for as a sacrifice would be made at the shrine of Nyakang, or at the grave shrine of any Shilluk king, if Nyakang or one of the kings had appeared in a dream—or if a king had "possessed" a man causing him to become ill—so when Nikaiya becomes immanent sacrifice is made by throwing a live sheep, with its legs bound, into the river.

Hofmayr states that the *bareth* may divine that a new-born infant has been sent by Nikaiya; if a boy it will then be called Nikaiyo, if a girl Nikaiya.[1] When such a child grows up and becomes betrothed an offering must be made to Nikaiya as part of the wedding ceremony. The couple go to the river, where the *bareth* slaughters a male black and white sheep, smears the young people with the contents of the stomach, and fastens the ear-lobes with beads on to the feet of the bride. Beer, tobacco, earth, and parts of the sacrifice are thrown into the river for Nikaiya, and the betrothed bathe in the river. They are then conducted by the *bareth* to a house prepared for them in the bride's village, and must remain there for three or four days.[2]

There is a limited cult of the Dinka god, Dengdit, perhaps confined to the southern part of the country. Fig. 2 of Pl. IX represents a shrine to Dengdit in Odong hamlet, not far from Fenikang, and we both saw and heard of other instances. The example figured is, as far as we could determine, unlike any Shilluk shrine and was said to be of Dinka pattern. The present incumbent took over the shrine at the death of his grandmother, a Dinka woman, who had been possessed by Dengdit to whom she erected the shrine. The iron bracelets shown in the photograph have all been brought by Shilluk, who visit the shrine in considerable numbers. No doubt the possession of the present incumbent resembles the Shilluk possession by their *ror* (kings).

We should also mention the spirits of the bush and river, i.e. creatures resembling mankind in form but with non-human functions

[1] Op. cit., 277. [2] Hofmayr, op. cit., 291.

778 made at all times of stress and misfortune. Everything round a shrine is
782 sacred, especially trees - they are particularly rare in Shillukland in any case.

643 Certain Shilluk kings, particular incarnations of Nyikang, tend to be
776 identified with particular species of animals. If such an animal approach-
825 es the shrine without signs of fear, it is assumed to be the form in which Nyikang appears, and a sacrifice is offered at the shrine. Almost any unusual behaviour on the part of an animal would lead the Shilluk to look on it as a temporary incarnation of Nyikang. Nyikang's mother, Nikaiva, is reputed to have been a crocodile and is believed to live in the river in that form. A sacrifice is made to her by throwing a live sheep into the river. The crocodile is generally spared even though these creatures are a danger in river crossings.

177 There is a limited cult of the Dinka spirit Dengait, and also a belief
794 in the spirits of the bush and river.

THE CULT OF THE ANCESTORS

769 Beliefs concerning the ancestral spirits are vague. Reference is
775 made to *pun juok*, 'the country of the dead', which is reached by the spirit after long wandering through the bush, but it is also believed that the spirit persists in or around the grave. Offerings and sacrifices are made to the ancestral spirits by the head of a household or local lineage on behalf of the descendants. If there is sickness or misfortune or the possibility of danger, a person will pray to his ancestors and make an animal sacrifice to propitiate them.

The ancestral cult seems, however, to be overshadowed by the national cult of Nyikang and the royal ancestors.

TOTEMIC BELIEFS

771 Seligman suggests that Shilluk totemism may have been derived from the
825 Dinka because it seems so slight and unimportant. According to Hofmayr and Westermann the clans appear to have totems and some clans derive themselves from an animal or fish which Nyikang took and turned into people in order to populate the country. Hofmayr states that totem animals are
[824] often killed but it is considered wrong to eat them.(1) Most totems are
[428] animals but a few are plants. Children inherit their totems from their fathers; a woman keeps hers even when she is married.(2)

MAGICAL PRACTICES

The Witchdoctor (Ajuago)

756 *Ajuago* means 'man of Juok'. Such people are regarded as possessing
791 certain magical powers which they use for the good of the community.
787 People go to them when they are in need of help and pay them for their assistance. The powers of the *ajuago* are believed to be due to their

(1) Hofmayr, *Die Schilluk*, 1925, p.235.
(2) *Ibid.*